

CLAIMS

1. A method of managing information that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, comprising:
 - receiving information from a user at a first node of the communication network, the information indicating user-specified criteria related to an establishment located in the communication environment;
 - storing the information at a central database that is linked to the communication network;
 - monitoring the user's location within the communication environment;
 - determining if the user is located near an establishment that satisfies one or more of the user-specified criteria; and
 - sending a notification to the user if the user is near an establishment that satisfies one or more of the user-specified criteria.

2. A method as defined in claim 1, additionally comprising:
 - receiving a revision to the information at a second node of the communication network;
 - revising the information stored in the central database to reflect the revision to the information;
 - making the information in the central database available to authorized users at a plurality of nodes of the communication network.

3. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the first node of the communication network comprises a wireless data acquisition device.
4. A method as defined in claim 3, wherein the data acquisition device is a mobile phone.
5. A method as defined in claim 2, wherein the first node and the second node are the same device.
6. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the received information includes a items needed list of at least one item, and wherein at least one criterion is whether an item on the list can be obtained at an establishment, and additionally comprising:
sending a notification to a user only when the user is near an establishment at which the user can obtain an item on the items needed list.
7. A method as defined in claim 6, wherein an additional criterion describes a geographic location of an establishment, and additionally comprising:
sending a notification to a user only when the user is near an establishment that is located at the geographic location described in the additional criterion.
8. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein monitoring the user's location within the communication environment comprises monitoring the location of a data acquisition device associated with the user, the data acquisition device comprising a node of the communication network.

9. A method as defined in claim 8, wherein the location of the data acquisition device is determined at the first node.
10. A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the location of the data acquisition device is determined by the data acquisition device.
11. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the user is near an establishment when the location of the user is within a predetermined distance of the location of the establishment.
12. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein sending a notification to a user comprises sending a notification over the communication network to a data acquisition device associated with the user.
13. A method of managing data that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, comprising:
 - receiving data from a node of the communication network, the data indicating at least one criterion that can be satisfied by an establishment located in the communication environment;
 - obtaining a location of a remote device in the communication environment, wherein the remote device is a node of the communication network;
 - identifying an establishment as a qualified establishment when an establishment satisfies at least one of the criterion;

determining whether the location of the remote device relative to the location of the qualified establishment satisfies a condition; and transmitting an alarm over the communication network to the remote device if the condition is satisfied.

14. A method as defined in claim 13, wherein the data includes a list of at least one item, and wherein one criterion is whether an item on the list can be obtained at an establishment such that an establishment can be qualified establishment only when an item on the list can be obtained at the establishment.

15. A method as defined in claim 14, wherein an additional criterion relates to a price of an item on the list such that an establishment can be a qualified establishment only when an item on the list can be obtained at the establishment for a price specified in the data.

16. A method as defined in claim 14, wherein an additional criterion relates to an establishment name such that an establishment can be a qualified establishment only when the establishment has the establishment name.

17. A method as defined in claim 14, wherein an additional criterion describes a location such that an establishment can be a qualified establishment only when the establishment has a location that matches the location described in the criterion.

18. A method as defined in claim 13, wherein determining whether the location of the remote device relative to the location of the qualified establishment satisfies a condition comprises determining whether the location of the remote device is within a predetermined distance to the location of the qualified establishment.

19. A method as defined in claim 14, wherein transmitting an alarm over the communication network to the remote device comprises sending a notification to the remote device that an item from the list can be obtained at the qualified establishment.

20. A method as defined in claim 19, wherein transmitting an alarm over the communication network to the remote device additionally comprises sending a notification to the remote device indicating that the qualified establishment is nearby.

21. A method as defined in claim 13, additionally comprising:
storing the data in a central data store on the communication network;
receiving notification from a node of the communication network that the data has been revised;
revising the data in the central data store to reflect the revised data; and
making the data in the data store available for access by nodes of the communication network.

22. A method as defined in claim 13, additionally comprising making the data available only to a node that is operated by an authorized user.

23. A method as defined in claim 13, wherein the remote device comprises a mobile phone.

24. A method of managing data that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, comprising:

receiving data from a node of the communication network, the data including a list of items;

obtaining a location of a user within the communication environment;

identifying an establishment as a qualified establishment that provides at least one of the items on the list;

determining that the location of the user relative to the location of the qualified establishment meets a standard; and

notifying the user over the communication network that the user is near the qualified establishment.

25. A method as defined in claim 24, wherein the data includes at least one criterion and wherein an establishment is identified as a qualified establishment only when the establishment meets at least one of the criterion.

26. A method as defined in claim 25, wherein a criterion specifies a name of an establishment such that an establishment is identified as a qualified establishment only when the establishment has the specified name.

27. A method as defined in claim 25, wherein a criterion specifies the price of an item such that an establishment is identified as a qualified establishment only when the item can be obtained the establishment for the specified price.

28. A method as defined in claim 25, wherein a criterion specifies a location such that an establishment is identified as a qualified establishment only when the establishment is at the specified location.

29. A method as defined in claim 24, obtaining a location of a user within an environment comprises identifying a location of a remote device associated with the user.

30. A method as defined in claim 29, wherein notifying the user over a communication network that the user is near the qualified establishment comprises sending a transmission to the remote device, the transmission including a notice that the user is near the qualified establishment.

31. A method as defined in claim 29, wherein the remote device comprises a mobile phone.

32. A method as defined in claim 24, wherein determining that the location of the user relative to the location of the qualified establishment meets a standard comprises determining that the location of the user is within a predetermined distance of the location of the qualified establishment.

33. A method as defined in claim 24, additionally comprising maintaining a list of users that are authorized to access the data.

34. A system that manages information that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, the system comprising one or more processors that execute program instructions and receive a data set, wherein the program instructions are executed to cause the processor to:

receive information from a user at a first node of the communication network, the information indicating user-specified criteria related to an establishment located in the communication environment;

store the information at a central database that is linked to the communication network;

monitor the user's location within the communication environment;

determine if the user is located near an establishment that satisfies one or more of the user-specified criteria; and

send a notification to the user if the user is near an establishment that satisfies one or more of the user-specified criteria.

35. A system as defined in claim 34, wherein the program instructions are executed to further cause the processor to:

receive a revision to the information at a second node of the communication network;

revise the information stored in the central database to reflect the revision to the information;

make the information in the central database available to authorized users at a plurality of nodes of the communication network.

36. A system as defined in claim 34, wherein the information includes a list of at least one item, and wherein one criterion is whether an item on the list can be obtained at an establishment, and wherein the program instructions are executed to further cause the processor to:

send a notification to a user only when the user is near an establishment at which the user can obtain an item on the list.

37. A system as defined in claim 34, wherein the user is near an establishment when the location of the user is within a predetermined distance of the location of the establishment.

38. A program product for use in a computer system that executes program steps recorded in a computer-readable media to perform a method for managing information that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, the program product comprising:

a recordable media;
a program of computer-readable instructions executable by the computer system to perform operations comprising:

receiving information from a user at a first node of the communication network, the information indicating user-specified criteria related to an establishment located in the communication environment;

storing the information at a central database that is linked to the communication network;

monitoring the user's location within the communication environment;

determining if the user is located near an establishment that satisfies one or more of the user-specified criteria; and

sending a notification to the user if the user is near an establishment that satisfies one or more of the user-specified criteria.

39. A program product as defined in claim 38, wherein the operations further comprise:

receiving a revision to the information at a second node of the communication network;

revising the information stored in the central database to reflect the revision to the information;

making the information in the central database available to authorized users at a plurality of nodes of the communication network.

40. A program product as defined in claim 38, wherein the information includes a list of at least one item, and wherein one criterion is whether an item on the list can be obtained at an establishment, and wherein the operations further comprise:

sending a notification to a user only when the user is near an establishment at which the user can obtain an item on the list.

41. A system that manages data that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, the system comprising one

or more processors that execute program instructions and receive a data set, wherein the program instructions are executed to cause the processor to:

receiving data from a node of the communication network, the data indicating at least one criterion that can be satisfied by an establishment located in the communication environment;

obtain a location of a remote device in the communication environment, wherein the remote device is a node of the communication network;

identify an establishment as a qualified establishment when an establishment satisfies at least one of the criterion;

determine whether the location of the remote device relative to the location of the qualified establishment satisfies a condition; and

transmit an alarm over the communication network to the remote device if the condition is satisfied.

42. A program product for use in a computer system that executes program steps recorded in a computer-readable media to perform a method for managing data that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, the program product comprising:

a recordable media;

a program of computer-readable instructions executable by the computer system to perform operations comprising:

receiving data from a node of the communication network, the data indicating at least one criterion that can be satisfied by an establishment located in the communication environment;

obtaining a location of a remote device in the communication environment, wherein the remote device is a node of the communication network;

identifying an establishment as a qualified establishment when an establishment satisfies at least one of the criterion;

determining whether the location of the remote device relative to the location of the qualified establishment satisfies a condition; and

transmitting an alarm over the communication network to the remote device if the condition is satisfied.

43. A system that manages data that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, the system comprising one or more processors that execute program instructions and receive a data set, wherein the program instructions are executed to cause the processor to:

receive data from a node of the communication network, the data including a list of items;

obtain a location of a user within the communication environment;

identify an establishment as a qualified establishment that provides at least one of the items on the list;

determine that the location of the user relative to the location of the qualified establishment meets a standard; and

notify the user over the communication network that the user is near the qualified establishment.

44. A program product for use in a computer system that executes program steps recorded in a computer-readable media to perform a method for managing data

that is received from one or more users over a communication network in a communication environment, the program product comprising:

a recordable media;

a program of computer-readable instructions executable by the computer system to perform operations comprising:

receiving data from a node of the communication network, the data including a list of items;

obtaining a location of a user within the communication environment;

identifying an establishment as a qualified establishment that provides at least one of the items on the list;

determining that the location of the user relative to the location of the qualified establishment meets a standard; and

notifying the user over the communication network that the user is near the qualified establishment.